

**Missouri Department of Conservation NEWS: March 16, 2012**

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## **Bash trash in Missouri with April Trash Bash!**

**JEFFERSON CITY Mo** -- Many signs of spring in Missouri are a welcome sight. Green shoots and flowering trees and bulbs promise warmer weather ahead. Unfortunately, other sights during spring aren't so welcome, such as litter along roads and highways, in our communities and in our outdoor spaces. Help fight litter through Missouri's annual No MOre Trash! Bash in April.

The Trash Bash is an annual event sponsored by the Missouri departments of Conservation (MDC) and Transportation (MoDOT) as part of their ongoing No MOre Trash! statewide anti-litter campaign. The agencies encourage people to clean up litter all across Missouri from roadsides, parks, neighborhoods, rivers, streams and other places. Trash Bash activities also include educational efforts in schools, at rest areas, community events, Earth Day celebrations, media promotions and more.

"This is the tenth year of No MOre Trash! in Missouri," said Stacy Armstrong, MoDOT No MOre Trash! coordinator. "Through the years, hundreds of thousands of volunteers have picked up more than half a million bags of trash during April Trash Bashes. That's a lot of litter!"

Last year, thousands of volunteers collected more than 157,000 bags of trash and many more truckloads of debris during the 2011 April Trash Bash. Volunteers included MoDOT and MDC employees, Adopt-A-Highway groups, Stream Teams, Scout troops, schools and community groups and others.

Littering isn't just ugly, it also hurts wildlife and Missouri outdoors.

"Missourians care about conserving our forests, fish and wildlife," said MDC No MOre Trash! Coordinator Joe Jerek. "Animals get tangled in litter, such as plastic six-pack holders and fishing line, and it hurts and kills them. Litter also poisons fish, birds and other wildlife, along with their habitats, such as streams."

Littering also costs money. Littering can cost a person up to \$1,000 in fines and one year in jail. MoDOT spends more than \$5 million each year cleaning litter from roadsides. MDC spends almost \$1 million a year cleaning litter from conservation areas and other locations.

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"Besides recognition, we all get some exercise, fresh air and a cleaner place to work, live and play," Armstrong said.

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